



## CONFERENCE CONNECTION

We need to be strong every day to meet the demands of life. We need constant spiritual nourishment. In the October 2013 general conference several Church leaders taught how prayer and scripture study strengthen our lives.

How can you better remember daily prayer and scripture study?

Well, you might put your scriptures on top of your school backpack. Or you could tape a picture of the Savior on the inside of your bedroom door. Use your imagination. Whatever you come up with, the increased spiritual stamina from regular prayer and scripture study will keep you going strong. For more, visit [lds.org/go/scripturesNE2](http://lds.org/go/scripturesNE2).



Here are thoughts shared by President Thomas S. Monson:

"Allied with prayer in helping us cope in our often difficult world is scripture study. The words of truth and inspiration found in our four standard works are prized possessions to me. I never tire of reading them. I am lifted spiritually whenever I search the scriptures."

"We Never Walk Alone," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 122.

"May we ever strive to be close to our Heavenly Father. To do so, we must pray to Him and listen to Him every day. We truly need Him every hour, whether they be hours of sunshine or of rain."

"I Will Not Fail Thee, nor Forsake Thee," *Ensign*, Nov. 2013, 87.

## DATING 101

The room was abuzz with energy. Nearly 500 priests and Laurels from eight stakes in the Dallas, Texas, area had gathered together for a dating conference. Enough excitement bounced around the room to fuel a small country for a month or two.

For example, one part of the dating conference included a dance. Yet once the music started playing, you could hardly hear the tunes above the constant chatting as the youth continued getting to know one another.

The whole conference was

jam-packed with instruction on wholesome dating practices in accordance with Church teachings.

They had a musical skit about dating. Youth speakers spoke about dating from male and female perspectives. The conference also featured Brad Wilcox, a member of the Sunday School general board, who spoke about how young men and young women can form proper and appropriate bonds. He emphasized that the dating experience should be fun and should leave lasting, happy memories.



Sophia B., a Laurel who attended, said, "Sometimes we think we're missing out, but hearing Brother Wilcox's message helped me realize it's really not worth the emotional pain of turning from our standards."

This was the third annual dating conference for youth in the Dallas area. The youth and



leaders who plan these conferences hope to combat troubling trends and ideas surrounding dating among teenagers today. One trend at many high schools these days is the tendency to date one person exclusively.

Jacob C., a priest, explained, "The world sees *dating* as having a boyfriend or girlfriend

## WE'VE GOT MAIL

### GRATEFUL FOR ANSWERS

I wanted to say thank you so much. The *New Era* is amazing. I just thought I would tell you that your hard work answers prayers. This week a friend did some things that hurt me deeply. I was frustrated, scared, and confused about what to say to fix things.

Overwhelmed, I opened the *New Era* hoping for some answers. I opened to the Questions & Answers section in the February 2013 issue, where I found exactly what I needed to hear and the confirmation I had been praying for.

**Hailey B., 16, Utah, USA**

and being together all the time. When talking about dating with my friends at school, I usually have to translate what it means to me."

*For the Strength of Youth* teaches, "Avoid going on frequent dates with the same person" ([2011], 4).

Throughout the conference, youth were able to surround themselves with good friends who follow the same dating standards. They met youth from surrounding areas, received great instructions on dating, and had a fun time all in one setting.

### GROUP DATE IDEA: A "BIGGER, BETTER" RALLY

Can a single pencil hold the power to make your wildest dreams come true? Not likely. However, you might be surprised at its potential during the course of a single evening.

For a fun and inexpensive group date, consider planning a "bigger, better" rally. This is similar to a scavenger hunt. You split a large group up into two smaller groups, head out to visit the homes of friends and families you know, and then come back at the end to compare results.

In this game you have a single goal: to keep trading whatever you have for something that is bigger or better. Each team starts out

with the same object: a pencil or some other small item. Then you visit as many friends and families you know as you can in the agreed-upon time limit to make as many trades as possible. You might go from a pencil to a pair of used pliers to a skateboard, and so forth.

Those simple pencils can turn into incredible things by the end of the night! Consider donating whatever you end up with at the end of the activity to a local charity or thrift store.



### MY FAVORITE SCRIPTURE

**Alma 32:21** "AND NOW AS I SAID CONCERNING FAITH—FAITH IS NOT TO HAVE A PERFECT KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS; THEREFORE IF YE HAVE FAITH YE HOPE FOR THINGS WHICH ARE NOT SEEN, WHICH ARE TRUE."

This scripture really helped me in my life to stand firm and be strong, especially in my speech, in my testimony, in school, and in other aspects of my life.

**Kristin P., 17, Iloilo, Philippines**